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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Special Political Committee
(A/45/821 and Corr.1)]

45/72. International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 44/46 of 8 December 1989,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and of the importance of international co-operation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international co-operation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international co-operation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Gravely concerned at the extension of an arms race into outer space,

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Aware of the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to the socio-economic advancement of mankind, in particular that of the peoples of developing countries,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and application as well as in various national and co-operative space projects, which contribute to international co-operation in this field,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 1/ on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 2/

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its thirty-third session, 3/

1. Endorses the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

2. Invites States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space 4/ to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties;

3. Notes that, at its twenty-ninth session, the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in its working groups, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 44/46; 5/

1/ A/45/589.

2/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/45/20).

4/ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/45/20), sect. II.C.

4. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee that the Legal Sub-Committee, at its thirtieth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Continue, through its working group, the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space with the aim of finalizing the draft set of principles;

(b) Continue, through its working group, its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(c) Continue, through its working group, its consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries;

5. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee concerning the organization of work in the Legal Sub-Committee;

6. Notes that, at its twenty-seventh session, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/46; 6/

7. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, at its twenty-eighth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Consider the following items on a priority basis:

(i) United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the co-ordination of space activities within the United Nations system;

(ii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

(iii) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites including, inter alia, applications for developing countries;

(iv) Use of nuclear-power sources in outer space;

6/ Ibid., sect. II.B.

(b) Consider the following items:

(i) Questions relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space;

(ii) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(iii) Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine;

(iv) Progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme; the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation should be invited to present reports and arrange a special presentation on this subject;

(v) Matters relating to planetary exploration;

(vi) Matters relating to astronomy;

(vii) The theme fixed for special attention at the 1991 session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee: "Applications of airborne and satellite remote sensing for prospecting mineral and ground-water resources and for monitoring and managing biological resources, with emphasis on agriculture, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries"; the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation should be invited to arrange a symposium, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the Sub-Committee's session, at the end of its meetings, to complement discussions within the Sub-Committee;

8. Considers, in the context of paragraph 7 (a) (ii) above, that it is particularly urgent to implement the following recommendations:

(a) All countries should have the opportunity to use the techniques resulting from medical studies in space;

(b) Data banks at the national and regional levels should be strengthened and expanded and an international space information service should be established to function as a centre of co-ordination;

(c) The United Nations should support the creation of adequate training centres at the regional level, linked, whenever possible, to institutions implementing space programmes; necessary funding for the development of such centres should be made available through financial institutions;

(d) The United Nations should organize a fellowship programme through which selected graduates or post-graduates from developing countries should get in-depth, long-term exposure to space technology or applications; it is also desirable to encourage the availability of opportunities for such exposure on other bilateral and multilateral bases outside the United Nations system;

9. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should reconvene, at its twenty-eighth session, the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with a view to improving the execution of activities relating to international co-operation, particularly those included within the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and to proposing concrete steps to increase such co-operation, as well as to make it more efficient;

10. Also endorses the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, as endorsed by the Committee and as contained in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report of the Working Group of the Whole; 7/

11. Decides that, during the twenty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space shall be reconvened;

12. Endorses the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1991, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications, 8/ and urges all States to make voluntary contributions to the Programme in order to enhance its effectiveness;

13. Emphasizes the urgency and importance of implementing fully the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as early as possible;

14. Reaffirms its approval of the recommendation of the Conference regarding the establishment and strengthening of regional mechanisms of co-operation and their promotion and creation through the United Nations system;

15. Expresses its appreciation to all Governments that have made or expressed their intention to make contributions towards carrying out the recommendations of the Conference;

16. Invites all Governments to take effective action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

7/ A/AC.105/456, annex II.

8/ See A/AC.105/446, sects. I and III.

17. Requests all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to co-operate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

18. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

19. Urges Member States and international organizations to consider supporting the efforts of the United Nations in connection with International Space Year, 1992;

20. Endorses the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that Member States, in planning their activities for International Space Year, consider ways in which those activities could complement the efforts under way for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development planned for 1992;

21. Recommends that more attention be paid to all aspects related to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

22. Considers that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions with space debris and other aspects of space debris, and calls for the continuation of national research on this question;

23. Also considers that space debris could be an appropriate subject for discussion by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the future;

24. Urges all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes;

25. Takes note of the views expressed and documents circulated during the thirty-third session of the Committee and during the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly concerning ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes;

26. Requests the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session;

27. Also requests the Committee to continue to consider, at its thirty-fourth session, its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

28. Requests the specialized agencies and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, enhance their co-operation with the Committee and to provide it with progress reports on their work relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

29. Requests the Committee to continue its work, in accordance with the present resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

65th plenary meeting
11 December 1990